

AESA progressed on capacity development, networking and knowledge management in the past six months.

Capacity Development

AESA organized an e-discussion on capacity development of extension and advisory service (EAS) providers during 4-23 June 2015 and recently completed a review of capacity development in EAS. We are currently engaged in developing a facilitators' guide for capacity needs assessment of EAS providers. The plan is to develop, test and refine the facilitators' guide for carrying out capacity needs assessment in four countries (India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) in South Asia in the coming six months.



AESA also participated in a consultation on the development of learning materials to build capacity for extension evaluation at the regional and national levels. This consultation, organised by GFRAS on 23-24 April 2015 at Wageningen (The Netherlands), was meant to identify the core competencies required to undertake assessment and evaluation of extension by those enabling, managing, and conducting evaluation.



The groups also discussed the types of learning resources that are required to impart these competencies.

AESA participated in a writeshop on development of the “New Extensionist Learning Kit Modules” organised by the GFRAS at Pretoria (South Africa) during 17-21 August 2015. This writeshop aimed at developing self-directed learning materials to support core competencies needed by extension professionals.

Networking and Policy Engagement

AESA co-organised and participated in ‘Reaching the Millions: A face-to-face workshop on Rural Advisory Services’ held at Hanoi, Vietnam during 2-7 March 2015. The workshop hosted by the A&FS Network and organised by HELVETAS

Swiss Intercooperation in collaboration with the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), the Asia-Pacific Islands Network for Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) and AESA came up with the “The Hanoi Statement on Rural Advisory Service Systems” which was endorsed by 68 RAS experts and practitioners. AESA participated in the first Constituent Assembly of Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) held on 24-26 August 2015, at Bangkok, (Thailand). The purpose of this assembly was to help reshape the collective actions, mechanisms and governance of GFAR.



AESA web-portal

AESA published seven blogs, three good practices, four meeting notes, two book reviews and one face-to-face interview during the last 6 months (March 2015-August 2015).

The screenshot shows the AESA website interface. On the left, there is a blog post titled "ARE WE GENERATING NEED BASED AND RELEVANT LIVESTOCK TECHNOLOGIES?" dated August 11, 2015. The text discusses the importance of disseminating improved livestock technologies to enhance productivity. On the right, there is a Facebook post titled "Good Practices 11: August 2015" with the sub-heading "POSTMASTERS AS COMMUNITY-BASED EXTENSION AGENTS". The post discusses the effectiveness of farmer extension agents and the role of the State Department of Agriculture (SoA).

The AESA facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/428431183848161/>) currently has more than 11,800 members. We are currently using the facebook group, the AESA email list, the AESA LinkedIn group (<https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=5055791>) and the AESA twitter handle (https://twitter.com/AESA_Extension) to promote new knowledge on extension and advisory services. We are regularly upgrading the AESA Web Portal for enhanced visual appeal and facilitate ease of use. We have added several new publications to the portal.

Funding

AESA received funding support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for continuation of its knowledge management and networking activities for one more year (till May 2016). GFRAS is also supporting AESA for developing a facilitators' guide for conducting capacity needs assessment of EAS providers and to undertake capacity needs assessment in four countries in the region.

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